

APPRAISING A HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT'S WORK

A CHECK SHEET FOR THE HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT'S OWN USE

Situation: The home demonstration agent has many advantages in her work -- an elastic work schedule, easily adjusted to meet emergencies and personal convenience or preference; variety in her activities; and most important of all, a worthwhile job to do and the inspiration of working with an appreciative group in doing it.

There are, however, certain unfavorable conditions of work -- constant interruptions, emergencies, and diversity of detail; an ever-expanding program; a large area to cover; a great number of people to work with; lack of definite measures of results. It is chiefly through a knowledge of accomplishment that an agent finds how much the advantages of her job outweigh the disadvantages.

As everybody who is at all familiar with the present Extension program know, there are a great many changing conditions which are forcing agents to reconsider their ways of organizing and conducting their work. Among these major changes none is more significant than the change towards an expanded program. The ever-widening subject fields are causing Extension to adjust from:

The Old Way	to	The New Way
Intimate Face-to-Face Contacts		Mass Media (Radio, Press)
Direct Teaching		Teaching Through Leaders
Individual Practice		Group Action

Extension agents would like to keep all the good qualities of the old way and adopt as well the "New Look." That calls for superior ability to organize, direct, and work with people. The agent who achieves in the new way evaluates herself not in terms of what she gets done for people but what she gets people to do for themselves.

In order to live with her job and adjust it to the needs of people in her county, an agent must periodically appraise her progress towards desired objectives.

Prepared for use at Indiana District Conferences by Mary L. Collings, Division of Field Studies and Training, Extension Service, Washington, D. C., October 1947.

Purpose: This check sheet is intended for the use of the agent as a means of appraising progress towards objectives having to do with abilities to work with and through people. In so far as these objectives are those considered desirable by an agent and by the Extension Service in her state, they may be a guide to effort and achievement by that agent.

Use: In using this form for self-analysis the agent should consider her purposes, activities and procedures as objectively as possible. She should analyze all the evidence at hand without undue modesty or over-justification. Only in that way can this check sheet be helpful.

Objectives: An agent's objectives may be endless in number and stated in many ways. For our present purpose let's consider such personal objectives as these:

To develop within herself -

1. Ability to set up a working organization among rural people.
2. Ability to plan with rural people.
3. Ability to administer a program of action.
4. Ability to lead rural people to evaluate work in terms of self-sufficiency.
5. Interest in improving ability to handle an expanded program.

DO WE HAVE THE NEW LOOK?

A Check Sheet of Working Procedures 1/

Do My Procedures Make Possible:	:Very sat-: :isfactory:	:Unsatis- :Partial:factory
I. ORGANIZATION TO GET THINGS DONE	:	:
A. Organization "fences" are mended by:	:	:
1. Groups planning for expansion	:	:
2. Groups selecting own leaders	:	:
3. Rotation of leadership responsibilities	:	:
4. Past leaders helping to train incoming leaders	:	:
II. MAKING PROGRAM PLANS WITH RURAL PEOPLE	:	:
A. Systematic participation of local people:	:	:
1. County Extension Committee functions	:	:
a. Studies major problems	:	:
b. Determines major objectives	:	:
2. Home Economic Council, 4-H, Older Youth functions:	:	:
a. Studies (or surveys) needs and interests:	:	:
b. Analyzes factual data	:	:
c. Selects phases for study	:	:
d. Determines teaching objectives	:	:
e. Adapts project plans	:	:
f. Divides responsibilities for	:	:
(1) Phases of work	:	:
(2) People or groups	:	:

1/ The devices worked out by groups at the 1946 Evaluation Workshop in Chicago, the Supervisors' Workshop at Ohio, the Administrators' Workshop at Wisconsin, and by the Indiana Committee on County Extension Organization have been drawn on for many of the ideas in this Check Sheet.

	Very satisfactory	Partial	Unsatisfactory
3. Local Clubs function:			
a. Analyze local needs and interests			
b. Adapt activities to local needs			
c. Prepare local plans			
d. Obtain local leaders			
e. Set up local demonstrations			
f. Divide responsibilities for:			
(1) Phases of work			
(2) People in community			
III. ADMINISTERING A PLAN OF ACTION			
A. Provision for leader training			
1. Training includes time for leaders to			
a. Set objectives			
b. Learn subject-matter			
c. Decide on functions and activities			
d. Plan use of home visits, meetings, tours, bulletins and other methods			
e. Decide on reports to be collected by leader			
B. Use committees to get work done			
1. Committees are used regularly to			
a. Survey needs and interests of rural people			
b. Collect other local data			
c. Work out objectives and programs			
d. Select leaders			
e. Carry out specific plans			
f. Make all meeting arrangements			

	Very sat- isfactory	Partial	Unsatis- factory
C. Provision for coordination with work of other agencies and groups	:	:	:
1. Set up procedure for exchange of information between Extension leaders and other agencies	:	:	:
a. On common purposes, plans and responsibilities	:	:	:
D. Use of agent's own time	:	:	:
1. Analyzes the whole job	:	:	:
a. Makes monthly calendar of things important to do	:	:	:
b. Has procedure for meeting different sorts of calls	:	:	:
c. Follows daily schedule:	:	:	:
(1) Utilizes the moments for odd jobs:	:	:	:
(2) Uses the free hours or half hours for important tasks	:	:	:
2. Puts plan into practical operation	:	:	:
a. Attacks each job directly	:	:	:
(1) Avoids needless stopping and starting	:	:	:
(2) Arranges good sequence of jobs (doing most important things first)	:	:	:
(3) Delegates jobs and trains helpers	:	:	:
(a) Transfers teaching responsibilities to leaders	:	:	:
(b) Progresses to new groups or individuals as leaders assume responsibilities for established work	:	:	:
b. Fits daily plan to individual personality	:	:	:
(1) Adjusts order of work to fit "slow starting" or "easy tiring" personality	:	:	:

	Very sat- isfactory	Partial	Unsatis- factory
E. Plans for training of clerical staff	:	:	:
1. Trains secretary to	:	:	:
a. Collect in advance material necessary for answering requests	:	:	:
b. Answer all minor or routine requests	:	:	:
c. Map out the day's work	:	:	:
d. Prepare background material for reports:	:	:	:
e. Handle some public relations contacts	:	:	:
f. Make meeting announcements	:	:	:
IV. EVALUATING RESULTS	:	:	:
A. Has a definite plan to analyze	:	:	:
1. Work procedures followed	:	:	:
2. Progress in effective methods of problem solving	:	:	:
B. Plan includes	:	:	:
1. System of records	:	:	:
2. Procedure for collecting evidence	:	:	:
3. Analysis of results by local people with agents	:	:	:
4. Re-planning on basis of accomplishments	:	:	:
5. Use of evidence in a program of public relations	:	:	:

	Very sat- isfactory	Partial	Unsatis- factory	
V. IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL ABILITY BY:	:	:	:	:
A. Open minded attitude - favorable to new ideas	:	:	:	:
1. Adopts new methods	:	:	:	:
2. Introduces new subject-matter fields according to needs	:	:	:	:
B. Breadth of interest indicated by:	:	:	:	:
1. General reading (news, professional journals, magazines, and books)	:	:	:	:
2. Membership in and participation in programs of professional organizations	:	:	:	:
3. Participation in activities outside specific professional groups, as civic, cultural, etc.	:	:	:	:
C. Makes effort to be well informed in fields of professional activity as indicated by:	:	:	:	:
1. Taking advantage of assistance offered by specialists and supervisors	:	:	:	:
2. Familiarity with Extension studies and other pertinent research and the use of such findings as are applicable to situation in county	:	:	:	:
3. Participation in studies, initiation of Extension studies if needed in county: calling attention to problems of county that call for research by Experiment staff	:	:	:	:
4. Interest in graduate study	:	:	:	:

